Colchester Public Schools - Budget Questions 2022-2023

Budget Workshop -3/15/2022

1. **At the BOE Meeting, March 8, the superintendent recommended that the reduction of teachers at Bacon Academy be changed from a 5.0 FTE reduction to a 3.0 FTE reduction. What was the reason for this change?**

   In the initial budget discussions earlier in the year, it was decided to reduce 5.0 FTE teaching positions at Bacon Academy due to declining enrollment and due to potential increases in other areas. Since that initial conversation, we have had the opportunity to consider many influences and potential unintended consequences if we cut five positions. We identified that it could compromise the successful implementation of the Capstone Projects as a graduation requirement starting with next year's seniors, which will necessitate the addition of at least six new sections of the half-year Capstone course. In addition to that, we were concerned if we cut 5.0 FTE, it could have deleterious effects on our ability to offer an ample amount of electives across both the Humanities and STEM that students need to graduate. In essence, we could probably make the class sizes fit, but the cut to opportunities for students might be too much based on our graduation requirements. In addition, the significant savings that were realized in the employee related insurance line eliminated the need for the full five positions to be removed.

2. **The Alternative Education program is no longer being offered, either at Bacon Academy or the Old Academy, so how are those students being served?**

   The Alternative Education (Alt. Ed.) program has been an integral part of CPS for many years, serving a population that benefited from the personalized, separate program. Over the last several years, the number of students qualifying for the Alt. Ed. program significantly declined, presumably by a very high graduation rate from Alt. Ed. and the increased focus on varied and responsive interventions and supports that have been built at Bacon Academy. In Spring of 2021 we were forecasting that only 2-3 students were eligible to attend Alt. Ed. for the current school year, and it was determined that staffing a program with six certified teachers for so few students was not a viable program. The students were placed in other programming and we are very happy to report that they are all currently on pace to graduate this year. In fact, one was just offered a full-time career at Electric Boat upon graduation due to their success and the great training they have received in our Technology Education programs. Their success this year can be directly connected to a brand new program we recently started called Brick. The Brick program is a highly individualized student support

program that is currently servicing approximately 20 of our most disenfranchised students. We are seeing immense success thus far, and the Board will hear more about this program at their May Board meeting.

3. **Will Colchester Public Schools continue to use Old Bacon Academy for instructional purposes?**
   The district will continue to evaluate the instructional programming potential for Old Bacon Academy and we look forward to the potential revitalization of the building in the future.